# Mayor's Commission on Poverty Reduction
*Meeting Minutes*

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**Date of Meeting:** January 23, 2014

**Minutes Prepared By:** Susan Perry/Nora Farrell

## 1. Purpose of Meeting: Monthly meeting; Review of draft recommendations

## 2. Attendance at Meeting

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| Mayor Fraim – not present | Andy Protogyrou | Angelia Williams | Judy Begland – not present |
| Lynne Berg – not present | Nash Bilisoly – not present | Sandra Brandt | |
| Gary Bryant | Hosey Burgess | Clarence Coleman | William Crow |
| Joe Dillard | Deborah DiCroce – not present | Anthony DiFilippo | Michael Goldsmith |
| Dave Harnage – not present | William Harrell – not present | Kurt Hofelich | Richard Homan |
| Sharon Houston | Kirk Houston – not present | Adale Martin | Courtney McBath – not present |
| Thaler McCormick – not present | Charles McPhillips – not present | Suzanne Puryear | Sharon Riley |
| Jerry Robertson – not present | James Rogers | L'Tanya Simmons – not present | Sarah Sterzing |
| James Wofford | Joseph Baron | Sarah Bishop | Linda Rice |

## 3. Agenda

1. Welcome/Goals of Meeting/Updates
2. Work Group Recommendations: Goals and Strategies
3. Prioritization Criteria and Discussion: Work Groups – did not get to this topic
4. Commission Implementation Models
5. Closing Remarks

## 4. Meeting Notes, Decisions, Issues

I. **Welcome/Goals of the Meeting/Updates**
   a. Councilman Protogyrou welcomed the group and thanked them for their presence at the meeting. He discussed how good things are already happening based on the work of the Commission and referenced the Council implementing a living wage for all city employees in the next fiscal year as well as considering Universal Pre-K in the next budget cycle.
   b. Saphira introduced the goals of the meeting which was: to understand and accept draft recommendations to date; review the recommendations from all the work groups;and take the opportunity to ask questions and clarify each one. Additionally, the Commission would identify cross-cutting recommendations from all work groups and identify any outstanding questions; review consolidated recommendations in small groups; revisit specific criteria in mind; and identify top priorities and short and long-term pacing for the implementation plan. Overall goal: to get a plan that will be successful and can be implemented.
   c. Saphira also mentioned that we would review models of implementation from other cities, and discuss the most appropriate models for Norfolk.
   d. Saphira also thanked the work groups and the team of City staff for their hard work and creativity in producing the draft recommendations for the Commission and noted the importance of what is there, and not there – understanding tough choices made in each group to set priorities, and in recognition of the great research done.

e. Saphira asked if there were brief updates from Commissioners on new information or insights, input from their peers or work groups that they came across since we met last that they believe would be helpful to our process.

   i. Chief Goldsmith informed the Commission members that the Hampton Roads Community Leadership Partners contacted him about doing a tour of the City and getting information on some of Norfolk's challenged areas so that they might get an idea of where their resources might do the most good. He believes it might be helpful for their group to see and hear about the efforts of the Mayor's Commission on Poverty Reduction and asked if Commission members would be willing to assist with a presentation to the group, prior to embarking on the tour. The presentaiton would identify what poverty looks like in Norfolk, where it is, and how we are trying to attack it. In addition to the Commission members, the tour would include city employees from police, human services, schools, etc. This presentation/tour will take place in the later part of March. Commission members agreed to participate and the Chief will follow up with the leads of the workgroups with more information.
   ii. Sarah Sterzing noted that ODU is getting ready to unveil their "State of Early Childhood" research that the Commission may want to explore further.
   iii. Sarah Bishop applauded the work of the Administration and City Council to be forward thinking in the draft proposals/recommendations in light of the upcoming budget deliberations.
   iv. Vice Mayor Williams noted that as we move forward, it will be important to not forget the people who are living on the cusp of poverty and who may be living one paycheck away from poverty.
   v. James Rogers encouraged the group to continue to advocate in the community on this topic and to stay engaged after the recommendations were complete. He noted that since the Commission has spent this time researching best practices in this area, members are best poised to weigh in on topics of poverty. Vice Mayor Williams echoed James' sentiment and asked that members alert City Council if they are willing and able to continue their work once the report is complete.

f. Saphira noted that by March 2014, we plan to engage residents again in looking at the Commission's priorities and inviting them to weigh in. The workgroups have taken the fall town hall meeting input into consideration as they have finalized recommendations. We will plan to do the same, once we received feedback in the spring.

II. **Workgroup Recommendations: Goals and Strategies**
    a. Saphira asked Commissioners to review each goal and strategy worksheet as a group. She asked if there were questions or recommendations for what they would like to see in the final version. She provided a list of criteria for prioritizing and refining each recommendation that they established in the fall.
    b. An attending resident asked when a person living in poverty would be asked to be part of the Commission. Saphira and Councilman Protogyrou responded to say that the town hall meetings served as an initial avenue for seeking public opinion. Councilman Protogyrou noted that residents who attended the town hall meetings were invited to attend and participate in the regular scheduled meetings.
    c. The first page of the recommendations were cross-cutting themes through all the groups' strategies. Saphira noted that these charts serve as a scaffolding for the overall plan, and will be an appendix to the written narrative plan.

    d. Early Childhood Development Recommendations Comments:
       i. Make clear what population each recommendation is targeting (high school, middle school, pre-k, etc.)
       ii. Is it intended that Early Childhood be a right (tax-funded) or a privilege (sliding scale)?
       iii. More research is needed on how many people are not enrolling eligible children into available preschool programs.
       iv. Address economic disincentives to making money (for child care providers.)
       v. Simplify the term "In-reach" so that all can understand (social service term.)
       vi. It was asked that if 1.1.2 was accomplished, wouldn't it negate the need for 1.3. Be clear on the difference.

vii. A resident noted that we should consider having quality childcare in communities where residents don't have vehicles so that there is a solid foundation for getting children in these communities into early childhood education programs.

viii. There was discussion about making early childhood education mandatory for public housing recipients. Some Commission members asked that we make it mandatory for everyone and not just those in public housing. It was noted that, prior to moving in this type of direction, we would need factual backing for requirements. Some parents may cherish this time with young ones and keep them at home. Educating parents on early childhood education is very important. Input from parents will be important in refining this recommendation.

e. Youth Education and Career Pathways Recommendations Comments:
   i. Desired Outcome and Goals cut off
   ii. 2.2.5 – change to invest in "career" and technical educational programs rather than "vocational"; Also ensure that we are to invest in programs that we know have been successful (through rigorous research.)
   iii. Clarify "up and out" services or reword to more common, less judgmental language.
   iv. 2.4.2 – Would like to have a report from NPS that addresses the state of mental health in our schools - let us know what we need to do and how we fund it; Is it a capacity issue?; What is the plan to make it more than the minimum requirements? If we have assessments, then we can plug students into the appropriate services; Consider developing partnerships with local colleges and universities with students who are eager and need internship hours.

f. Neighborhood Revitalization and Support Recommendations Comments:
   i. 3.1.3 is vague and needs to be more specific about what this means.
   ii. Consider combining 3.1.3, 3.2.1 and 3.2.1 (it's listed twice.)
   iii. Define was is meant by distressed neighborhoods in 3.2.
   iv. In 3.3 consider changing to eliminate "in our public housing communities" and reference tactics (inclusionary housing, density bonuses, inclusionary zoning ordinances.)
   v. Incorporate college and university volunteers – align with neighborhoods that are distressed – mention and streamline in plan; however be aware that organizations have to be ready to nurture and take care of the volunteers once they dedicate their time to a project.
   vi. Promote social media such as "Next Door" as a conduit for neighborhood news.
   vii. Need to connect people to services; they aren't aware of all of the available services – use IMPACT center as a model. Hire three dedicated people to get information out to the public on workforce and social/mental resources.

g. Adult Workforce Development Recommendations Comments:
   i. 4.2 was intended to allow the workgroup to understand the barriers and obstacles in place; Needs assessment with ODU was mentioned. Could this be more specific and focus in on the intended populations that are known to have the greatest needs?
   ii. Campaign to advertise 211 so all citizens know it as well as 911.
   iii. Be sure to utilize resources that are already in place.
   iv. Talk to those who are in poverty and really ask what they need – are there obstacles we aren't looking at?

h. Cross-cutting Recommendations
   i. Communication – we need to ensure that there is a system of communication in place that is ingrained in the way we do business that allows citizens to know of all of the available services.
   ii. Councilman Protogyrou noted that we should have someone at the level of an Assistant City Manager to track and coordinate the plan
   iii. Increase emphasis on parents and their role.

III. **Commission Implementation Models:**
   a. Saphira shared a Power Point summary of efforts in other cities to jumpstart a discussion on the kind of structure envisioned to implement the Commission's work once the report is complete. She referred to a handout describing several Commissions across the

country. Asks, Commissioners: What models might work here?  What will it take to keep you all engaged in advocating and supporting the work itself beyond your time on this Committee?

    a. Councilman Protogyrou stated that he believed a dedicated staff member in the City Manager's Office, modeled after the Bloomberg model, is the way to move forward; This person would ensure that targets have been met and form relationships and leverage funds; it would be someone with expertise in the area of poverty.

    b. The cons of this approach were discussed - it would be city-driven and possibly city-funded and the group would lose the influence and investment they have collectively as a public-private group.

    c. Sarah Bishop noted that there is value to having tax-dollars supporting this initiative but noted that the way we communicate has to be very different from current practice.

    d. Kurt Hofelich believed that the public/private partnership is more appropriate.  He suggested that we might set up a public/private agency who could then hire a "czar" or an expert person.

    e. Another con to a City-controlled poverty "czar" is that the person would now be competing for funding with all other agencies for resources that are already limited.

    f. Another opinion was that we need a political convener with connections to poverty.  A Czar is too extreme; The Mayor and Council members must push the plan and a smaller group or entity would carry forward the action steps in the plan.

    g. It was noted that we need accountability and someone to cut through the red tape to encourage conversation

    h. Commissioners noted that the Office to End Homelessness model could work, which was a public/private model with strong Mayoral support.

    i. It was also noted that we could consider the Smart Beginnings Model – this organization had the ear of City Council, the Community Foundation, the Mayor and the business community, and was housed in a nonprofit agency.

IV. **Closing Remarks**

    **a.** Vice Mayor Williams thanked everyone and recognized how deep the Commission members have delved into the issue of poverty.  She noted that some items the Commission has proposed will be implemented quickly and others will take a long time.  She also noted that the City Council is excited about what the Commission is doing and wanted Commission members to understand that the work they are doing will make an impact in the future of the City.